LOADSTAR LETTER

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C-65s Available

Not a rumor! The *C-65* is here, from Europe, in limited quantities! These brand new *C-65* computers have a built-in 3.5-inch drive. You can get your hands on one from *The Grapevine group*. If you can't wait for a review from *LOADSTAR*, we suggest getting one now. See *The Back Page*, on Page 8.

CBS Uses Computer To Conjure Names For TV Movies

During an interview with *Tom Snyder, Lindsay Wagoner,* of *Bionic Woman* fame, informed Snyder that she didn't know what the current name of her soon to be released Television movie will be because "...they run different titles through a computer to see what kind of response the titles get..."

Apparently the computers are taken so seriously that they keep feeding in alternative names until the top score can no longer be topped. Somehow this *LOADSTAR* reporter still feels that in the end, some CBS executive puffs on a cigar and says, "Y'know, I like the title that first came across my desk. ❑

RoboCop Deployed, Nabs Murderer

This is no urban legend. I don't have a city or state. I heard this piece of news on ABC (or Mutual) news Friday, September 3, 1993 while driving home for lunch, and didn't begin paying attention until it was almost too late. Never heard it reported again.

A crazed gunman killed his girlfriend and then closed himself in a closet with his gun. The local police, found themselves in a standoff with the gunman. Instead of risking the S.W.A.T. team, the police decided to deploy their 384 pound remote controlled roving robot. The robot, originally designed to safely disarm bombs without endangering human lives, successfully entered the house, roved to the bedroom, opened the closet door and disoriented the suspect by spraying the perpetrator with its high-pressure water nozzle. The robot then confiscated the weapon, allowing the police to enter safely and make the arrest. ❑

CBM's President, Jim Dionne, Quits

There are unconfirmed reports that Jim Dionne, President and General Manager of Commodore Business Machines, is in the process of leaving the company, and that the successor to what some people refer to as "the revolving presidency" has already been selected. Spokespersons contacted at Commodore's West Chester headquarters today refused comment, and Dionne himself was not available. It is reported that the announcement of Dionne's decision to leave the company was made at the Commodore dealer meeting held at the World of Commodore Show in Pasadena.

Having passed the 18-month boundary many of his predecessors failed to cross, Dionne has held his current position for almost three years. He is the fifth person to hold the title of Commodore's President in the past eight years. ❑

Reprinted with permission of the "Starship" 5 minute news, on *GEnie*.

Email Your Favorite President On GEnie!

President Clinton's address isn't only at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. It's also at Page 1600, *The Whitehouse RT*, on *GEnie*, part of Clinton's promise to be closer to the public. Don't expect to chat live with Clinton, but you can send him mail. Someone at the Whitehouse *will* read your note. I've already written, letting Clinton know where I support him and where I don't. Note: This man *is* the President. We want to keep all of you as subscribers, but it's difficult to afford *LOADSTAR* when you're incarcerated in a federal prison. So if you have something caustic to say to President Clinton, don't include any threats. It's illegal to even joke about certain threats. *GEnie* sends your name and address. *THEY KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE IMMEDIATELY!* So let's be civilized out there, even if we didn't vote for Clinton. ❑

Up Close, With Rick Nash

Newcomers to *LOADSTAR* may not know of Rick, but he's a prolific submitter, the man who taught me almost everything I know about ML programming. When a subroutine just won't work, Rick is the man I call. Sometimes I have the problem fixed by the time I get the question completely asked.

Rick and I have grown into close friends. I love him like a brother though I've never met him, and I have the phone bills to prove it. Join us in this discussion and you'll see why I think Rick is such a great guy.

LS: When and where were you born?

Rick: I was born at Ravenna, near my hometown of Kent, Ohio in May 1954.

LS: Your life story in 100 words or less?

Rick: My wife Linda, daughter Terri, and I moved to Millersburg, Ohio in 1979. Our town is the county seat of Holmes county, the center of the largest Amish community in the world. It's a rural farming area, with beautiful rolling hills. My daughter is 17, and until last year attended the Holmes County Training Center, a school for the mentally retarded and physically handicapped. My primary responsibility is to stay home and take care of Terri, who has been multi-handicapped since birth. Fortunately, I've been able to find work that allows me to work at home. I've been programming for almost seven years for a local electronics firm, *DU-IT Control Systems Group. DU-IT* manufactures wheelchair controls and environmental controls for quadriplegics.

LS: What did you think of computers as a kid?

Rick: Not much. I was aware of computers, but you have to remember that my childhood was long before personal computers. In those days, mainframes were vogue, and most people that worked with computers had un-interesting jobs like keypunch.

LS: Geeze! You're right. My age is showing. When I was aware of them, computers were tools only of the rich. Heck, even calculators used to cost way more than I have in my wallet right now. Now I might get a free calculator with a $10.00 order.

Rick: One thing does stand out in my mind. It was during a business education class in high school. A company brought in a huge desktop calculator for demonstration. I remember being floored by the fact that it could divide, and it actually had a display instead of paper tape! I could be wrong, but I think it was a Commodore Calculator.

LS: Commodore's roots are indeed on calculators. How did you become interested in computers?

Rick: I frequented *Radio Shack* stores, and had seen the *TRS-80* model computers on display. It wasn't long before I thought, *"I MUST have one these!"* So in 1979, I used my income tax return to go buy a *TRS-80 Model 1*. I had planned to buy the low end (Level 1 BASIC, 4K RAM) version for around $600. Imagine my wife's surprise when I came home with the $1200 Level 2, 16K version! I had purchased a book on Computer Games, and I immediately tried to smooth things over by entering a game. About 3 hours later, I saved the program to tape, and then tried to load it back. The program vanished! Needless to say, my wife was unimpressed!

LS: Hah! My wife's eyebrows went up when, dirt broke, I took out a high interest loan and bought my first 1541 drive and DPS-1101 printer for a total cost of over $500!

Rick: Tell me about it. I have seven CD ROM drives on my BBS.

LS: Which mode do you prefer? 64 or 128?

Rick: It depends on which language I'm using. For BASIC, there's no question that I prefer the 128 mode. Being a machine language enthusiast, it has to be the 64 mode. This is mainly because of the experience I have with the operating system. Once you start learning the inner workings of the 64, it's really a joy to program!

LS: What made you buy the Commodore?

Rick: Price, and that it had color. My first *Commodore* computer was a *VIC-20.*

LS: You also program the *PC and the Amiga. When you "upgraded" Why didn't you "get rid" of your C-128D like many 8-bit deserters?*

Rick: The *C-128* is a very capable machine! It will be a very long time before the *Commodore* machines outlive their usefulness!

LS: You're considered a guru world wide now. Who taught you to program?

Rick: Guru eh? My head is starting to get pretty fat! I don't consider myself a guru at all. I associate that word with people like Jim Butterfield. He has been a real mover and shaker in the *Commodore* world. As far as learning to program, I did it on my own with books. *Lots* and *lots* of books! Like most everyone, I started in BASIC, but my interest turned quickly to machine language. Before the end of 1979, I was learning Z-80 machine language on my *TRS-80.* In those days, I couldn't afford an assembler, so all my ML programs were hand-coded!

LS: How did you get into programming devices for the handicapped?

Rick: Quite by accident. A friend of mine owned a computer store in a neighboring town. I mentioned to him that I was doing a fair amount of machine language

programming. Several months later, I got a letter in the mail, and he said that he had taken on a project that he now had little time to complete. I had a meeting with the owner of a local electronics company, and agreed to take on the project. It took five years to complete! The product, called *Liaison*, is a workstation for quadriplegics which gives them control of computers.

LS: Have any of your devices been used by your daughter, Terri?

Rick: No. The products I work on are targeted toward a pretty small market. Usually for persons with cerebral palsy or quadriplegics. My daughter is multi-handicapped. She'll never develop beyond a few month's intelligence, so her aptitude is too low to control these devices.

LS: What types of devices have you programmed?

Rick: Mostly what are called micro-controllers. They are really just like the microprocessors found on your typical *Commodore*, or *Amiga* or *IBM PCs* except that they also have other things like timers, counters, A/D converters, and neat stuff like that built in. On computers like the *C-64*, those functions are performed by peripheral chips, like the C-64's CIA. Real Estate (PC board space) is critical in many products, so chip manufacturers combine the function of several peripheral chips, right onto the microprocessor to save space.

LS: What are you working on now?

Rick: A state of the art wheel chair system. Is has a slick 128x128 dot LCD display that is a blast to program! The wheel chair system even has a single chip modem on it that will allow our company to re-program the chair from our factory through the phone lines!

LS: How do you test your programs?

Rick: Alpha testing is done by engineers at the factory. We also use beta testers as the project nears completion. I've been on the wheel chair project for about a year and a half, with probably another year to go. As soon as the system can reliably drive a wheel chair, then it will go into beta.

LS: These devices use the same microprocessor as the C-64?

Rick: Many of our products use a variant of the *6502* called the *R6501Q*. It's made by *ROCKWELL*, and has much the same instruction set as the 6502 except for a few bit instructions that come in handy when dealing with things like ports, counters, timers and such. Our company has made a decision to move toward a different line of micro-controllers for our new products. This change is based on several factors. First, the new chips are low power. This is important for devices that run on batteries like a wheel chair system. Secondly, the new chips have a built in "bus" called I^2C (I squared C) that lets us connect several micro-controllers and let them communicate through a pair of wires.

LS: And this is your sole source of income?

Rick: My wife has a career, too. The really great thing about my line of work is that I can do it at home. This allows me to be home with my daughter, and still be able to generate income.

LS: Career trends are moving that way: Private citizens performing services at home with professional gear like computers. How would your describe yourself? Your life?

Rick: I think "average" sums it up. I'm especially proud that my work ends up helping so many people. The task of making quadriplegics independent is a great challenge. Knowing that *LIAISON* is allowing some quadriplegics enter the workforce is most gratifying. I have been working on a project for my daughter, though time to work on it has been a real problem. Hopefully I'll be able to complete it soon, so she can benefit from the computer era as well.

LS: How did you come into a relationship with LOADSTAR?

Rick: Some of my work was rejected by the big paper magazines at the time. I felt that my programs were turned down because of their size. LOADSTAR readers, on the other hand, didn't have to type programs in. So I took a chance, and sent in some of my programs. This, I think was about the time you (Jeff Jones) started with *LOADSTAR*. The rest is history! Over the years, I've gotten quite a few letters from *LOADSTAR* readers, and I'd like to thank them now for all the kind words. Without all the loyal readers, I wouldn't be able to share my craft with so many. I'd also like to thank Jeff and Fender for their support and guidance.

LS: How has LOADSTAR changed your life?

Rick: It's been most gratifying indeed! I've made many new friends, and have had a few interesting fame related incidents. *LOADSTAR* has been a very positive and important part of my life.

LS: We're about to publish your ZIP-BASIC mini compiler, which translates BASIC into pure FAST machine language. What are your plans for the future, for the C-64, for LOADSTAR?

Rick: My current wheel chair project is taking a lot of my time these days. Hopefully, things will slow down sometime soon, and I can work on some more *LOADSTAR* projects. The *C-64* has a very loyal following. I suspect that it will continue to thrive until the last user goes kicking and screaming to some other platform. Looking back at the relatively short term of personal computers, some people would say it's amazing that the *C-64* has been so successful. Actually, it's not all that amazing, as any *C-64* owner would tell you! ❑

DU-IT Control Systems, Inc.
8767 Township RD 513
Shreve, OH 44676

International Business Machines Malcontent

No one hates the PC world more than Commodore users. That includes *Amiga* users. The PC is the embodiment of vogue, of a salesman telling you what you're allowed to buy. I grabbed this diatribe from of *GEnie's Amiga* BBS. How many truisms can you find? And what did you say IBM meant?

J.KELLY44: Insultingly Boring Merchandisers. Itty Bitty Machine. Ingrained Batch Mentality. Intelligence Belittling Meaning. I Bought McIntosh. Incorrigible Boisterous Mammoth. Incest Begets Madness. Intellectuals Being Moronized. Inspect Before Multi-using. Inertia Breeds Mediocrity. It Beats Mattel. Insipid Belligerent Mossbacks. Imperialism By Marketing. Institution By Machiavelli. Into Building Money. Insipidly Bankrolling Millions. Innovation By Management. Impenetrable Brain Matter. Idolized By Management. It's a Big Mess. Ingenuity Becomes Mysterious. Investigate Baffling Malodor. Intolerant of Beards & Mustaches. Install Bigger Memory. I Bring Manuals.

YELLOWFELLOW: I'd Best Matriculate.

NIGHT.STAR: Jkay, you forgot Incredibly Boring Machines.

FRED.M: Inferior But Marketable. I've Been Misled. It Barely Multi-tasks!

S.LUTNES: I'd Buy Mac.

J.JONES36: IBM. I Barely Managed to boot windows. I Bungled Many archaic commands. I Bravely Mustered your Institutionalized Buying Mania. But I guess I gotta Be Me. ❑

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A Sysop's Nightmare

Recently Police confiscated a BBS system after leaning on a young man until he plead guilty to crimes that he most likely didn't commit. The Munroe Falls Police found a 15-year old volunteer and signed him up to Mark Lehrer's BBS under a false identity. They then set up to download a pornographic image, and called in the 15-year old boy to press RETURN.

After receiving the image, they swooped down on Lehrer and accused him of *"disseminating matter harmful to juveniles."* When charges didn't stick, they conveniently found a disk with a picture of a woman who they said ***could have been*** under 18. Without verifying the woman's age, they indicted Lehrer for pandering obscenity involving minors. Rather than endure more, Lehrer pled guilty. They took his entire computer system (about $3000 worth of equipment), and called it a day. Lehrer never served time, but paid a small fine.

Here are a few steps you can take to protect your BBS from the intrusive fingers of the government. These steps won't protect true criminals. Really, it only protects equipment from being "arrested" prematurely.

Here's a question and answer session with author, "computer lawyer", and radio personality Herb Kraft. He can be found on *GEnie*, in the *BBS Roundtable*. There's a important point he wants to make to sysops.

Question to Herb: I feel that I have the right to say what goes on on my BBS. I do not make it a habit to read all the Email but, I wanted to let the users know that there was a chance that I would read it. Many police do not have a clue about computer equipment. I know a guy that had everything in his room raided by the police. They even took his cat's bed. I don't need the harassment to begin with so I make sure nothing illegal is going on behind my back.

In this country nowadays, you are guilty until proven innocent. You would get something like, "You mean you do not know what is happening on your own system?" They'd say.

This is the deal: I have my BBS set up for support of the BBS software I wrote. This also happens to be the computer I use for my leisure, programming, etc. Now, someone sends someone commercial software through Email and I do not know about it. Then, someone tells the FBI or whomever that commercial software is being passed around in on my BBS in Email. They get the local police. They come into my home and take my equipment. Now, I am without a computer to maintain support for my customers and for doing what I like to do while it gets sorted out in court. I don't need that. Even if it turns out that I am not liable, I still don't need the hassle.

ANSWER: I want to tell *you* a horror story: if you take it upon yourself to monitor private Email then the cops ***can*** drag *your* equipment off! If you do have private email, and through mistake they take your

equipment, then you can sue the pants off them, just as happened in the Steve Jackson case. The federal government's spectacular loss and denunciation by the court in the case has sent shock waves through the government. Most cops have heard, or will soon hear, that they can't take the equipment if there is private Email. They can only copy the files. So, go ahead and insist on having no private Email. That is *a waiver of all sorts of legal protection.* I don't mean to make this sound snide. I am making a point.

Someone is brewing an illegal deal in your message base. I guess you're a co-conspirator since you obviously read, and by implication, agreed with what's going on! On the other hand, if you don't read private mail, and people are doing something wrong using your system, you're not liable. Period.

Under the ECPA you can read private Email, if it's necessary to protect your system, or, for routine quality control. *That doesn't mean you read all the mail unless you have a reason to suspect that a particular user and a particular message shows that they are not paying for access, etc.*

I am on a crusade to stop sysops from reading private mail routinely and to warn them why reading mail can get them into big trouble. Over time, more and more lawyers are agreeing with me about this. In a year or so, I predict, people will see the wisdom of this. ❑

Protecting Yourself When Buying/Selling

We hope that eventually our classified ads will subsidize the production of this newsletter. The *LOADSTAR* staff will take reasonable measures against fraudulent or illegal use of this feature. *Softdisk* is in no way liable for unsatisfactory merchandise purchased through an ad in this section, nor do we make any claims regarding the suitability or fitness of any advertised item in this category.

It is obligatory on the buyer to establish suitability of an advertised item before purchasing. Furthermore, it is obligatory on the buyer to verify all terms and conditions of a sale with the advertiser before taking delivery of item(s) advertised. By terms and conditions, we are referring to item(s) listed for sale, price, method of delivery, insurance on delivered items, cost of delivery, etc.

Purchasers: Don't forget to determine who pays the shipping and handling. If it is not explicitly decided and agreed to beforehand, it is usually the receiver who pays shipping.

Consider getting any implied warranty or guarantee of suitability or fitness *in writing*. Insist that the seller include his/her full name and address in that warranty, and include the seller's address *on* the check or money order. Also include on the memo line of a check or money order specifically what items are being paid for.

Sellers: When shipping multiple items via COD, always try to package everything in ONE carton if possible. If this is not feasible, be sure to fill out SEPARATE forms and labeling for each package, and be sure to divide the COD dollar amount between the packages relative to, or according to the VALUE of the items contained within each package! Do NOT simply divide the total COD amount by the number of packages being shipped. That leaves you open. Example: Joe agrees to sell Bob a 16 MEG *RAMLink*, worth over $500, and a 1084 monitor for $350 total. Good deal. Joe packages the the two items in to two separate cartons, and makes the COD labels out for $175 each. When they arrive at Bob's door, Bob picks up one box, and realizes it is smaller. The *RAMLink* is obviously inside. Now if Bob were an unscrupulous person, he could take delivery of the smaller box only and get a 16 MEG *RAMlink* for only $175. Joe would have little, if any, legal recourse unless perhaps a detailed written agreement were made prior to shipment.

Don't forget to insure items of value exceeding $100. Make *yourself* the beneficiary of any insurance payments so that if the shipment is lost or damaged *you* get the insurance check and of course return the payment. ❑

Thanks to the *GEnie* Starship staff for formulating these guidelines.

Wish List

Programmers, take a look at our ongoing wish list. Take it upon yourself to bring the software to reality and we'll buy it from you for boucoup bucks. Read the fine print. Consistency sticklers, it was the only way to fit it in the letter.

C128.JBEE: I'd like a listing of reputable repair shops still in business.

HOWIE-CBM: Jeff, one program which I would love to see would be an upgraded and enhanced *Abacus Personal Portfolio Manager 128*. The original *PPM 128* is a mite limiting as to its pre-defined data base, and limited reporting feature. Maybe a *PPM 128* that uses a *SwiftLink* for faster communication, with the addition of a *SuperBase* type scripting language for enhanced reporting and finally the ability to expand the data base. I used *PPM* for a while, but because it could not provide the reporting I needed (even after some attempts at custom changes), I stopped using it, and instead settled on a combination of *BobsTermPro, Pocket Writer 3*, and *Pocket Filer 2*.

M.MATTING: A Fax program for *C-64* or *C-128*! It would be great to fax from *Geos*.

CMD-DOUG: I would doubt that a fax printer driver could be written for *GEOS*. The driver area is far too small for the amount of code needed to convert the file data into a fax format *and* the code needed to actually send it. Even if someone could squeeze that much code into the driver space, the speed would be terrible, what with converting data on the fly and sending it out. I think this would pretty much require at least a *desk accessory*. Then again, if anyone would like to prove this wrong...

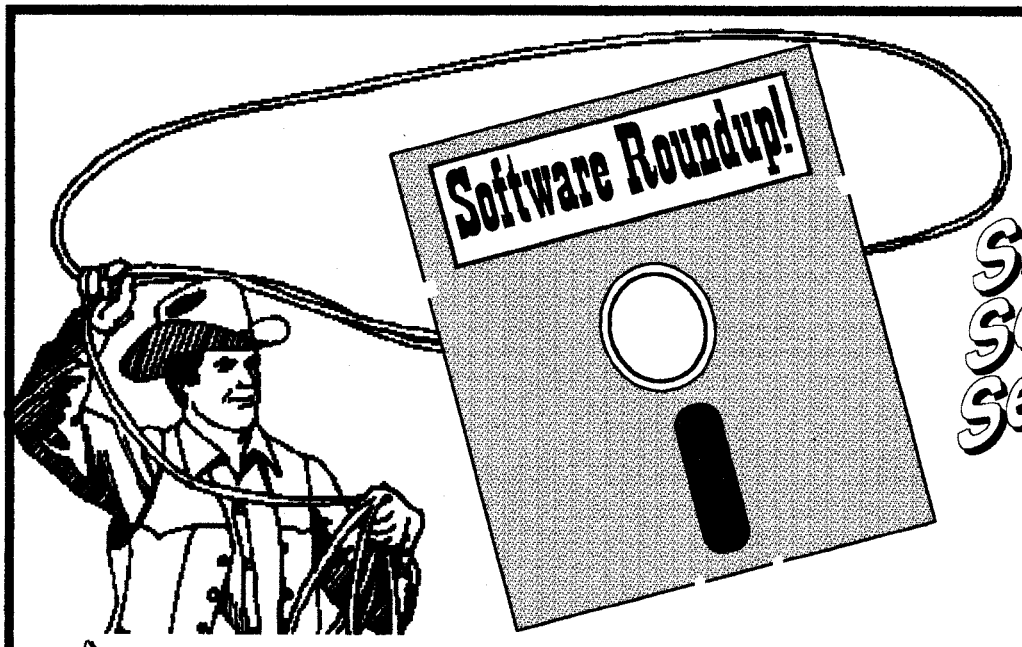
TOM.PATCH: Any chance that *MAILBAG Barcoder* program, on Issue 101 will be updated? It would be nice if there were an option to print the address and barcode on a #10 envelope. Maybe with your return address.

HOWIE-CBM: Jeff, at the risk of sounding dumb, since I have never seen the program, a nice feature for a barcode generator would be its ability to output printer code to a disk file. I am not sure if Barcoder uses ASCII, PETASCII, or graphics, and for example with a *Pocket Writer* it really would not matter. I could have PW (and by example probably any other WP) use that disk file as an equivalent external file for it to be placed at the correct location within PW output. So for example, the disk file HOWIE with my barcode would be placed by *Pocket Writer* into the output it does for my address. The file JEFF would have your barcode, etc.

Jeff: I can see how you would want to use the bar coder output with other programs and envelopes. We'll definitely add the features.

HOWIE-CBM: Maybe you could add a user switch for the output to disk to be in either Commodore printer compatible or Epson printer compatible coding? So, if Jeff would be a nice guy and offer this "switch" option then most needs of all Commodore users could be met. Whatta nice guy Jeff is!

J.JONES36: I'm indeed a nice guy, but we don't support the *1525* and "commodore mode" printers. The printers are junk and we don't have a working model. We do support *Epson* modes. Somebody's gotta take a stand, call the DEA, get those *MPS* and *1525* printers off the streets. ❑



Sizzling Software Selections!

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HD Series Hard Drives are available in capacities up to 200 MB, are fully partitionable, and can emulate 1541, 1571, & 1581 disks while Native partitions utilize MSDOS-style subdirectories. HD's connect easily to the serial bus or parallel via RAMLink. Includes built-in JiffyDOS, SWAP feature and Real-Time-Clock. HD Series Drives offer superior compatibility with most commercial software including BBS, Productivity and GEOS. And with new pricing, HD Series drives offer the lowest cost/MB of any C64/128 storage device.

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U.S. Shipping Information

Books & Software: First Item $5.00, plus $1.00 for each add'l item. **Hardware:** $5.50 per item, 2nd Day Air $10.00. **Power Supplies:** $7.50 ea, 2nd Day Air $14.00. **Hard Drive:** $15.00, 2nd Day Air $25. **RAMLink, FD Drive:** $9.00, 2nd Day Air $16.00. **RUN Issues:** $5.50 (3), $6.50 (6), $7.50 (12). **Note:** Prices subject to change without notice. Call for current price and availability. ALL Foreign Orders Call or Write for shipping details. **Payment:** MC, Visa, Money Order or Bank Check. COD shipments add $5.00. COD's over $200.00 require advanced deposit. Personal checks are held for 3 wks. No refunds on opened software. 30 day return policy. 10% restocking fee is required on all returns.

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The Back Page

by Jeffrey L. Jones

The *LOADSTAR LETTER* is a success! Nothing could make me happier. Well, okay: hitting the lottery, selling a book, a sci-fi story, or getting a record contract are a couple of feet higher on my list. However your appreciation doesn't go unnoticed.

Let's face it though: I'm the editor of a lagniappe. Running a deficit is about the easiest thing I can do. We need more ads! If you have equipment you want to sell, or something you want to buy, try buying it from or selling it to a *LOADSTAR* subscriber. It really makes a difference.

Also please note that while we don't have a copyright to the news, we do have a copyright to this newsletter. Please don't photocopy it and include it in your newsletter without our permission. *LOADSTAR* doesn't want to be confused with PD. Naturally you can re-write news without permission.

On other fronts, *The Grapevine Group* has a cache of new and refurbished *C-64's*. If you're looking for a brand new *1571, C-64, C-64C or C-65* (not a typo!) with built in 3.5 inch drive, you can get them at:

The Grapevine Group
3 Chestnut Street
Suffern, New York 10901
Orders 1-800-292-7445 Questions: 1-914-368-4242

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Classified Ads

LOADSTAR CLASSIFIEDS are 45 cents per word up to $25, in which case the ad becomes a 2-inch boxed ad, like the Clip Art Cupboard ad below. If you prefer the boxed ad, include a rough (but legible) sketch. Layout is free. For classifieds, name, address and phone number are free. No minimum. If you've got some hardware to sell or buy, or someone you want to meet, this is a way to get the word out.

HELLO, WORLD!

What the heck? I had an extra $4.50 to blow. Robert Sewell, 8085-A Kenyon Street, Del Rio, TX 78840

PRINTERS FOR SALE

STAR NX-2410 for sale. 24-pin printer, barely used. Letter quality. $135. $5.00 shipping. New and used ribbon. Jeff Jones, P.O. Box 30008, Shreveport, LA 71130-0008

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